

Coordination of Geographic Intelligence Activities in the U. S. Government

A. Background

For purposes of this statement, "geographic intelligence work" is defined as including the following activities:

- a) procurement of maps and geographical publications
- b) evaluation and appraisal of published maps
- c) production of maps
- d) research directed toward production of geographic studies
- e) photographic interpretation
- f) evaluation of foreign capabilities in the fields of mapping, geographic research, and photographic intelligence.

At present, a number of U. S. Government agencies are engaged in various aspects of geographic intelligence work on foreign areas. Principal agencies involved are Army (Army Map Service; Office Chief of Engineers; Office of the ACoF S, G-2; Beach Erosion Board), Navy (Hydrographic Office; Office of Naval Research; Photo Intelligence Center), Air Force (Aeronautical Chart and Information Center; Directorate of Intelligence, USAF), and Central Intelligence Agency (Geographic Research Area, ORR).

Although some efforts at coordination in this field have been made, there is no uniform coordination of the "geographic intelligence" efforts of these agencies.

There is a rather successful coordination of effort in the field of foreign map procurement, achieved through the Inter-Agency Map Procurement Committee - - an informal but highly effective group.

Through the medium of the NIS Chapter IX Subcommittee, a degree of inter-agency coordination in the field of evaluation and appraisal of published maps is achieved, although this coordination is largely limited to efforts in direct support of Chapter IX production.

Similarly, the NIS Chapter II Subcommittee provides a means of coordination of inter-agency efforts in geographic research, largely limited to efforts in direct support of Chapter II production.

However, a very large body of geographic intelligence work is being undertaken without benefit of any systematic inter-agency coordination. As a result, there is almost inevitably an overlapping or duplication of effort, due to (1) inadequate knowledge of work underway in the field of geographic intelligence, and/or (2) inadequate dissemination of work already completed or of publication lists reflecting such completed work.

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B. The Problem

To establish a means of coordinating information concerning geographic intelligence work underway by or for U. S. Government agencies consistent with a realistic recognition of security considerations of the individual agencies.

C. Possible Means of Achieving Coordination.

1. Informal personal contact on an ad hoc basis by working level personnel of the various agencies. This is the only method now used, except for the coordinating mechanisms mentioned under "Background", above.
2. Exchange of periodic status reports among agencies engaged in geographic intelligence work. This method has been tried sporadically in the past, but participation of agencies has been on a voluntary basis and the coordination efforts have been relatively short-lived. If this method is to be used, an official "blessing" that would require continuing participation would appear to be a necessity.
3. Establishment of a number of separate committees, each to cover a particular aspect of geographic intelligence. These committees might presumably be established on the initiative of CIA, in fulfillment of its coordinating responsibility, by contacting "key people" in the various agencies. There would be no formally-established mechanism for "lateral coordination" of related activities and interests among these various committees. Each of these committees might be similar in organization and method of operation to the Inter-Agency Map Procurement Committee.
4. Establishment of a formal, IAC-approved coordinating structure, with a "Geographic Intelligence Committee" and sub-committees for Map Procurement, Map Production, Geographic Research, and Photo Interpretation, for example. This structure would be similar to the EIC or the SEC, and would likely be established by an NSCID.

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD 25X1A9a

This morning [REDACTED] and I discussed in detail with [REDACTED] 25X1A9a

25X1A9a [REDACTED] the possibilities, plausibility, and ways and means of establishing some sort of coordination in the geographic research done by Federal agencies.


The problem was approached from many angles and some of the suggestions developed in the meeting were very good. However, one of the suggestions, one which is favored by George, made by [REDACTED] 25X1A9a leaves me with a great deal of misgiving. The suggestion entails the creation of a "Geographic Coordination Committee" or a "Geographic Intelligence Committee" which would act as a coordinating group over many of our activities, some of which are not geographic research.

25X1A9a [REDACTED] thinking is conditioned by the fact that he has had experience in the creation of the Economic Intelligence Committee, the Foreign Language Publications Committee, and the Scientific Estimates Committee. He feels the same approach, the same functions, and the same direction could be assigned to a "Geographic Intelligence Committee." I do not. What I have all along had in mind has been a fairly simple mechanism which would merely find out the present and projected geographic research done by other government agencies and CIA and to circulate in published form this information to interested parties.

The four subcommittees which [REDACTED] and George envisioned were 25X1A9a to be (a) a geographic research committee, (b) the NIS Chapter IX committee, (c) the Inter-Agency Map Procurement Committee, and (d) a

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photo intelligence committee. My specific objections against such a setup are (1) the Inter-Agency Map Procurement Committee is a going concern which has done a very good job in the past and gives every indication of doing a good job in the future. It is an informal committee so what would be gained by formalizing it? In making it formal is there not some danger that CIA might lose control of the committee? (2) the NIS Chapter IX Subcommittee is also a going concern. It has already been formalized and fits into the hierarchical setup of the established NIS structure. Lampshire's suggestion would interpose an unnecessary level between the NIS Chapter IX Subcommittee and the NIS overall committee. (3) As I see it, one of the greatest difficulties which we'll incur will be to get the other agencies to tell us what geographic research they are performing. They are much more likely to tell a small semi-informal group what their present activities and future plans are than they are to a large formalized "Geographic Intelligence Committee." Since security is the touchstone, the other agencies are much more likely to reveal their plans to a small select group rather than to a larger group which would contain representatives from non-IAC agencies, many of whom have only a passing interest in geographic research.

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